

# **Disaster Preparation for Persons With Disabilities**



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Developed by the  
Ancient Living  
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# Disaster Tips for People With Mobility Disabilities

The following information will assist people with mobility disabilities and will help make them more confident when disaster strikes.

## Storage

- Store emergency supplies in a pack or backpack attached to a walker, wheelchair, scooter, etc.
- Store needed mobility aids (canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs) close to you in a consistent, convenient and secured location. Keep extra aids in several locations, if possible.

## Emergency Kit

- Keep a pair of heavy gloves in your supply kit to use while wheeling or making your way over glass or debris.
- If you use a motorized wheelchair or scooter, consider having an extra battery available. A car battery can be substituted for a wheelchair battery, but this type of battery will not last as long as a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery. Check with your vendor to see if you will be able to charge

batteries by either connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery or by connecting batteries to a specific type of converter that plugs into your vehicle's cigarette lighter in the event of loss of electricity.

- If you do not have puncture proof tires, keep a patch kit or can of "seal-in-air product" to repair flat tires, or keep an extra supply of inner tubes.
- Store a lightweight manual wheelchair, if available.
- Arrange and secure furniture and other items to provide paths of travel and barrier free passages.
- If you spend time above the first floor of an elevator building, plan and practice using alternate methods of evacuation. If needed, enlist the help of your personal support network.
- If you cannot use stairs, discuss lifting and carrying techniques that will work for you. There will be instances where wheelchair users

will have to leave their chairs behind in order to safely evacuate a structure.

- Sometimes transporting someone downstairs is not a practical solution unless there are at least two or more strong people to control the chair. Therefore, it is very important to discuss the safest way to transport you if you need to be carried, and alert them to any areas of vulnerability. For example, the traditional "fire fighter's carry" may be hazardous for some people with some respiratory weakness.
- You need to be able to give brief instructions regarding how to move you.



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# Disaster Tips for the Hearing Impaired

**This checklist will assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired to be prepared when disasters strike.**

## Hearing Aids

- Store hearing aid(s) in a strategic, consistent and secured location so they can be found and used after a disaster.
- For example, consider storing them in a container by your bedside, which is attached to a nightstand or bedpost using a string or Velcro. Missing or damaged hearing aids will be difficult to replace or fix immediately after a major disaster.

## Batteries

- Store extra batteries for hearing aids and implants. If available, store an extra hearing aid with your emergency supplies.
- Maintain TTY batteries. Consult your manual for information.
- Store extra batteries for your TTY and light phone signaler. Check the owner's manual for proper battery maintenance.

## Alarms

- Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms. At least one should be battery operated.

## Communication

- Determine how you will communicate with emergency personnel if there is no interpreter or if you don't have your hearing aids. Store paper and pens for this purpose.
- Consider carrying a pre-printed copy of important messages with you, such as: "I speak American Sign Language (ASL) and need an ASL interpreter," "I do not write or read English," and "If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed."
- If possible, obtain a battery-operated television that has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports.

- Determine which broadcasting systems will be accessible in terms of continuous news that will be captioned and/or signed. Advocate so that television stations have a plan to secure emergency interpreters for on-camera emergency duty.

## Advocacy

- Recruit interpreters to be Red Cross emergency volunteers.
- Maintain advocacy for TV stations to broadcast all news and emergency information in open caption format.
- Ensure hotels have access packets for the deaf and hearing-impaired persons, including audible alarms, when you travel. Ask for them when you check in.



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# Disaster Tips for People With Visual Disabilities

**The more you prepare for earthquake or other disaster the more you will be able to protect yourself, your family, and your belongings.**

## Canes

- If you use a cane, keep extras in strategic, consistent and secured locations at job, home, school, volunteer site, etc., to help you maneuver around obstacles and hazards.
- Keep a spare cane in your emergency kit.

## Alternate Mobility Cues

- If you have some vision, place security lights in each room to light paths of travel. These lights plug into electric wall outlets and light up automatically if there is a loss of power. They will, depending on type, continue to operate automatically for 1 to 6 hours and can be turned off manually and used as a short-lasting flashlight.
- Store high-powered flashlights with wide beams and extra batteries.

- If you wear soft contact lenses, plan to have an alternative because you will not be able to operate the cleaning unit without power.
- Service animals may become confused, panicked, frightened or disoriented during and after a disaster. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed. A leash/harness is an important item for managing a nervous or upset animal. Be prepared to use alternative ways to negotiate your environment.
- Plan for losing the auditory clues you usually rely on after a major quake.

## Label Supplies

- If helpful, mark emergency supplies with large print, florescent tape or Braille.

## Secure Computers

- Anchor special equipment and large pieces of furniture, such as computers and shelving. Create a computer back-up system for important data and store it off site.

## Advocacy Issues

- Advocate that TV news not only post important phone numbers, but also announce them slowly and repeat them frequently for people who cannot read the screen.



Developed by a group of health care professions through a grant from the American Red Cross Northern California Disaster Preparedness Network

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# Disaster Tips for People With Medical Needs

In preparing for a disaster, such as an earthquake, storm, or power outage, people with special medical needs have extra concerns. This information will help you and your family prepare for a disaster.

## Medications

- Always have at least a three-day supply of all of your medications.
- Store your medications in one location in their original containers.
- Have a list of all of your medications: name of medication, dose, frequency, and the name of the doctor prescribing it.

## Medical Supplies

- If you use medical supplies such as bandages, ostomy bags, or syringes, have an extra three-day supply available at all times.

## Electrically Powered Medical Equipment

- For all medical equipment requiring electrical power such as beds, breathing equipment, or infusion pumps, check with our medical supply company and get information regarding a back up power source, such as a battery or generator.

## Intravenous (IV) and Feeding Tube Equipment

- Know if your infusion pump has battery back up, and how long it would last in an emergency.
- Ask your home care provider about manual infusion techniques in case of a power outage.
- Have written operating instructions attached to all equipment.

## Oxygen and Breathing Equipment

- If you use oxygen, have an emergency supply (enough for at least a three day period).
- Oxygen tanks should be securely braced so they do not fall over. Check with your medical supply company, regarding bracing instructions.
- If you use breathing equipment, have a three-day supply or more of tubing, solutions, medications, etc.

## Emergency Bag

- Have a bag packed at all times in the event you need to leave your home.
- A medication list
- Medical supplies for at least three days.
- Copies of vital medical papers such as insurance cards, Power of Attorney, etc.

## People Who Can Help

- An important part of being prepared for a disaster is planning with family, friends, and neighbors. Know who could walk to your home to assist you if other means of transportation are unavailable.
- Discuss your disaster plans with your home healthcare provider.
- Ask your local fire department if they keep a list of people with special medical needs.
- Keep a list handy of people and their phone numbers who can help.